

The Burning Brush, LLC
529 Bypass 72 NW
Greenwood, SC 29649
Diana DeBoer, Owner

A Greenwood ceramics business runs on faith

There is a lot of faith involved in owning a small business. It takes a leap of faith to start a small business and more faith to keep it running. Diana DeBoer, owner of the Greenwood ceramics studio The Burning Brush, goes one step further: She shares the faith among the community through her business.

DeBoer had always been artistic with a strong business sensibility. She once owned a cake-decorating business where customers often told her that her cake creations looked too beautiful to eat. Over three years ago, DeBoer discovered the medium of ceramics. "Now I've finally found a way to preserve my art," she says.

Inspired by a ceramics studio in Greenwood, DeBoer began considering opening her own ceramics business. When the studio closed, DeBoer realized her opportunity and opened The Burning Brush May 1, 2005. The Burning Brush is a studio where people of all ages can paint their own pottery. But it's also much more.

"It's not just a business, it's a ministry," DeBoer, an active member of Harris Baptist Church in Greenwood, says. "I want to be able to bring families together."

And so DeBoer started the "I'm a Branch Kids Club" of Burning Brush. The Kids Club meets at the studio every Saturday for a Bible lesson and fun with paints and pottery. When parents began asking for a club of their own, DeBoer formed the Angel Club, described as "Food, Fun, Outreach, and Awareness," where adults can meet at the studio for McAlister's deli sandwiches and pottery painting camaraderie. Half of the proceeds from Angel Club membership goes to Meg's House, a shelter for battered women and children. Every Wednesday from 10 a.m. to two p.m. is "Mommie and Me," a time when mothers and their young children can come to paint and sing along with special Bible songs.

In addition, The Burning Brush offers birthday parties, workshops, and even a mobile studio that can bring The Burning Brush's ceramic recreation anywhere in South Carolina.

DeBoer has visited the Greenwood area Small Business Development Center (SBDC) for counseling. "I think I need to continue to work with them," she says. "It was a very positive experience."

In October 2005, DeBoer applied for a Community Express Loan, a Small Business Administration pilot loan program for women, veteran, and minority-owned businesses. "It's definitely helped me in this slow time," she says, referring to the post-Christmas off-season. The loan has also allowed her to commit to more advertising for her business. DeBoer calls the Community Express loan a security blanket.

DeBoer is ambitious: She wants to spread both the Good News and the good news of her small business.

"I know I have a lot of good stuff out there," she says. "I just have to keep reminding myself to be patient."

And, of course, to keep the faith.

Visit The Burning Brush Web site at www.ceramiclegacys.com.